



Rivne, Ukraine

News from the Lighthouse of Hope The Маяк Надії Newsletter

Rivne, Ukraine

Spring 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

We are so sorry for a long, long silence. The New Year has started with some changes. Zhenya and his family have faced some difficult challenges this past winter. He still doesn't feel well and he is looking for a full-time job to take care of his family. Currently his wife works to maintain their family. They would appreciate prayers for steadfast faith and health.

Others have come alongside to help us. Some good Christian friends who joined with us in common ministry with chaplains and refugees in the Carpathian Mountains last year work with us as a mission and church as well.

Misha went a couple of times to the villages of Bushcha and Borshchivka to visit two families. Unfortunately the boys we worked with there have moved to other places to live or study. We pray for two middle age ladies who we know, for them to have open hearts to life changing decisions. Misha has offered to study God's Word with them and he is open to visit them as needed.

The Dubovyk family (our good Christian friends, who pray for us daily and encourage us) do family ministries. They help many families to find Christ and to put their faith in Him. They teach courses how to raise children and they prepare a couple of summer camps for the families. In late February, we as a family were invited to visit their home for a three-day seminar along with two other families who are in ministry. It was about how to recognize God's call to serve the families. We enjoyed it a lot. We feel that God desires to use us in this field because there are so many young couples around who do not live with God's leading, do not know how God teaches us to raise their children, or how to love each other with the love God loves us. Recently God showed us one such family, Sasha and Leisa. Sasha is from one of the villages we used to visit a couple years ago. Last summer Misha met him in our city because he moved here when he got married. Misha started to pray for him, spent a lot of time with him talking about Jesus, and of the completely different life we can have with God and of putting his faith in Him. And I began to talk with his wife Leisa, meet with her, give advice, and tell her about God. They have two little children but unfortunately they were quarreling too often, even wanted to break up. We started to meet with each of them separately and together as a couple as well. That was our first experience in ministry with a family. They heard the whole Gospel, but unfortunately for now they both are not ready to change their life by putting their faith in Christ. We continue to pray for them and communicate though it seems like they have broken up with each other. Anyway Misha continues to be around Sasha talking with him.

Another ministry which God showed us as an open door is the ministry with widows and parents of the soldiers who died in the war. We have a list of the families of our region who Misha and others would like to visit. Misha and Valera Pedchenko, the chaplain, (**see the letter from him below**) have visited already one family and are invited again. This ministry is very hard because it concerns people's feelings, sorrow and pain. It is a very needed ministry right now to support those people. The field is very big – from parents, wives to children. At the same time it needs time, efforts and God's leading, building the relationships, being ready to listen, understand and sympathize.

Recently we had one more meeting with a couple mothers of lost sons who were soldiers. Three of our families with children met with them. We had a chance to listen to the stories about their sons. We were trying to find the right words of encouragement that without God it is impossible to live with this pain, building the bridge to new relationship with them. We plan to organize a common picnic or trip outside to be around them, to talk and communicate more.

Now it is more of a time of studying and self education for us. We pray a lot and feel like God wants us to concentrate more on what is most important now given the situation in Ukraine. We are not going to stop the library and evangelism outdoors but will be more involved in other ways. All ministries are about preaching to the lost, building bridges of relationship, sharing the Gospel, and telling about Jesus.

With love, Misha and Lena

Below is the letter from Valera Pedchenko, the guy who serves as a chaplain at the hot spots of the war.

“My name is Valera. I'm 38 years old. I have a wife Natasha and 4-month-old son, Dima. I am a military volunteer chaplain. I want to say sincerely thank you for the support of our family and to tell a few words about my ministry.

I was born and raised in Kiev. In 2007 the most important meeting in my life has happened, the meeting with Jesus. God won my heart and I devoted myself to the ministry.

In 2010 I was ordained as a deacon ministry. I supervised drug rehabilitation ministry and was a mentor to alcohol addicted people for 5 years. I was also a chaplain in the prisons. Through the ministry to the addicted people many of them got to know Christ, and what is especially valuable for me, some of my close friends have become the part of God's family, and now serve in churches and rehab centers.

My wife is from a Christian family. In the time of the communist dictatorship her father was arrested and spent 5 years in prison for his faith in God. Before meeting with me, Natasha actively served God in Kharkov. She used to be a minister in the Sunday school for 12 years, taught the children and teachers, as well as wrote the articles on the spiritual topics (she is a journalist).

In 2012 God has joined our lives. We both cannot imagine our life without service to God and people. At first we lived and served in the Kiev region, and in 2014 our family moved to Rivne to help in organizing a new church.

The last two years, when the war has started in our country, God led us to serve the military. In 2014 it was my first rotation as a military chaplain to the Donetsk airport, which left a very deep mark in my memory. I planned to go there all the time, but the long-awaited event happened in our family – my wife's pregnancy. Pregnancy was very difficult, and for some time I stopped traveling to the war zone. After the birth of our son I continue my trips to the war zone, to the front. There were already two rotations this year, the third one is planned to be in May.

We are very thankful for the financial support; it was an answer from God for our financial need. We thank God that there are many Brothers and Sisters who are dedicated and sensitive to our country. Thank you for prayers and support of our people in a difficult time for our country.”

Our prayers, plans and hopes:

- ***Continue to meet with the widows, mothers of soldiers lost at the war, to build the long last relationship, make friends with them, share the Gospel and tell the Good News about Jesus.***
- ***Start the ministry with the handicapped soldiers, if God's will.***
- ***Be involved in the organization of summer camps as a ministry to the families from occupied territories. It is going to be August, 7-14, in Carpathians (Family Summer Camp for the Volunteers, ministers who serve at the conflict zone). There is a big need in encouragement for them, spiritual and physical strength renewal, refreshing the relations with Christ and in their families.***
- ***Take part in another camp organized for the leaders of the family ministry. It is more like training which is planning to be June, 20-26 in Carpathians. The vision: to learn how to make bridge to the unbelievers in the family ministry.***

Thank you for your support in prayers and finances. May God with you always!



Misha's Certificate from Christian Conferencee



Valera and Natasha



Natasha, Valera's wife, and their little son Dima



Valera, the chaplain. At the Donetsk airport



Donetsk airport and “the Cyborgs”



The chaplains at the war zone